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Notes for Address at Brigham Young University

29 March 2014

I look out at you and I can't help but see myself exactly 20 years ago—starting out in the Broadcasting Department. In many ways, that girl is a stranger I would hardly recognize now.

(I started on this journey because Dale Cressman opened the door for me coming out of the Lee library one night after a long day studying...)

–He'd just started graduate program... "Come see KBYU"

–Loved it... started writing and reading 30 second news and weather cut-ins on KBYU-FM. Then, to KBYU and the news. We had wonderful Adventures in TV-10! White van drive around to stories.

–As Dale can attest... I remember being quite a pest w/ my professors.  
When I was a student here, I never thought I was good enough.  
Call it insecurity, call it perfectionism, call it what you will—but I always thought I needed to be better.

I remember taking my KBYU show tapes to a handful of Professors for critiques

–Saying: Be honest. Be brutal, if you have to. Just tell me what I need to do to improve.

Having said that: my path in journalism wasn't always clear—at least in my own mind.

–I came to BYU w/ wedding colors picked out. (peach & teal)

–List of baby names.

–Graduate in April, married by August, baby a year from December...

It would be perfect!

I remember so vividly leaving this campus after graduation ceremonies with a diploma tucked in my purse and resumes all sent out. My parents wanted to take me out to celebrate, so we drove to Salt Lake City for dinner. I remember getting as far as the stoplight in front of Liberty Park—when it hit me like a brick!

"What am I going to do now? NOW WHAT? NOW WHAT? NOW WHAT?"

I promise you there will be many "NOW WHAT?" moments over the next few years. And I'm here to tell you—you wouldn't want it any other way. Had I known back then, when I was sitting in your shoes, what was ahead of me—the adventures, the challenges, the good and the bad, I'm not certain I would have ever gotten out of that car!

I've thought a lot about what I would say to that girl—on her white-knuckle ride down 9th south. And so today I offer you a few things I wish I'd know before I went out into the real world—a few important lessons I've learned from my own journey, since the day I was sitting in your shoes.

The First thing I would say:

### FIND A MENTOR.

I started working at KSL-TV while I was still in school.  
A few months after graduation I was offered a full-time job as a reporter.

At KSL, I was the new kid. Very GREEN. VERY INEXPERIENCED. Understandably, that didn't go over so well with many of the very talented, VETERAN journalists who frankly, didn't think I belonged there—that I hadn't yet earned a place in the newsroom. Looking back, I think they were probably right. I figured out very quickly that at 22, I was on a pretty steep learning curve. I needed HELP. And fast.

So, one day, at the end of my reporting shift, I approached someone I respected, whom I thought might be able to give me a few good pointers, an honest critique, some professional advice about my writing and on-air delivery. There in front of the assignment desk, I asked him, simply, if he would help me. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "I'm here to produce a broadcast, not train you!"

Hmmm... another "NOW WHAT" moment!

Well, first I headed straight for the ladies room for a good, long cry.  
Then, a few days later I tried again. This time, I went to the Executive Producer at the station—a step up from my last attempt—a woman with much more experience, and, more importantly, a willingness to share it. She walked me immediately into an edit room with a stack of tapes, a yellow note pad and a LONG LIST of recommendations: things I needed to do to improve. That was the beginning.

She taught me how to write... she gave me my first tube of TV lipstick!

Fast forward, over a decade later, when I began co-anchoring "The Early Show" on CBS, she mentored me all over again, putting her life on hold in SLC, for three months, to come to NY, to meet me at the studio at 4:00 every morning, to work through the day on stories and shoots, and to help me study and prepare until about 9:00 every night. THAT is a true mentor.

I hope YOU will SEARCH OUT a mentor you trust.

Someone who will help you, guide you and tell you the truth—even if it's hard to hear.

THE SECOND LESSON I'VE LEARNED: Work Hard & Be Persistent.

If there are times when you feel you're getting doors slammed in your face—you can't find a job, you're not up to your workload, that nobody will listen to you or take you seriously—I hope you'll remember this story.

In 1996, I was hired by ABC Network News to anchor a 24-hour cable news channel that ABC was starting up. It was designed to compete with NBC's venture called MSNBC, which is still on the air today.

I had signed a contract, left a job that I loved at KSL-TV in Salt Lake City, and got into a U-Haul and drove west. The DAY I arrived in the Los Angeles Basin, I opened the LA Times to read a headline that literally took my breath away.

There it was, "ABC CANCELS PLANS FOR CABLE NEWS."

Well, you can imagine my reaction reading this in the NEWSPAPER. I suspected I was in big trouble.

No notice. No warning. No cable network. No job. "NOW WHAT?"

I've since learned the newspaper is usually where you find out if you still HAVE a job in network news!!

Undaunted, I showed up for work in ABC's LA bureau anyway. And for several WEEKS, I just sat there and sat there and sat there. DOING NOTHING. ABSOLUTLEY NOTHING. Finally, one day I decided I couldn't take it anymore. I had to DO something. So, I got on the telephone, telling everyone that would listen at ABC—mostly in NY—that I WANTED TO WORK.

I called desk assistants, assistant producers, producers, anyone I could find, to introduce myself. And I had lists of story ideas at the ready. I also called news division Vice-Presidents, literally begging them to give me a chance.

Looking back, I was pretty relentless, and I'm sure, quite a nuisance. But I really figured I had nothing to lose and the worst they could say was NO!

So, I had been making these persistent pleas for weeks. And one morning, I was about to start my round of calls, when the Bureau Chief came to my little cubicle. He was quite a character—long hair, a chain smoker.

He gave me instructions for my first assignment at ABC.

"Camp OJ. 8:00 tomorrow morning."

For the next five months, I sat in the courtroom covering the OJ Simpson civil trial—on the air for Good Morning America almost every morning.

PERSISTENCE. That's how I got my start in Network News.

That and a lot of HARD WORK.

They say be careful what you wish for...

That first morning, I showed up at the Simpson Courthouse along with HUNDREDS other reporters & 35 cameras lined up outside. Talk about competition. And the rigors of the routine quickly settled in—to most mornings starting at 2:00AM for the live broadcast on Good Morning America, because of the East Coast/West Coast time difference. And THEN actually covering the trial all day. It was not easy.

But over the years, I have watched, in awe, some of the best in the business working harder than anyone else in the building. I've watched Diane Sawyer, in sweats & stocking feet, sitting with a producer to perfect a script well into the night. I've seen Lesley Stahl prepare for hours upon hours, with meticulous detail, for a single interview. They work very hard. They are persistent. That is why they have accomplished so much.

Success doesn't happen by chance.

To reap the reward, do what you've heard before and what you're hearing from me, now. Persistence. Hard Work. It's as simple as that.

Lesson #3: TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.

When I first started anchoring The Early Show, I received A LOT of opinions from a varied group of accomplished professionals about a lot of things I did. From my interviews to the color of my suits. It was a full whirlwind of opinions from good, well-intentioned people.

As someone who felt I still had a lot to learn, I tried to adopt the advice, but quickly realized all the advice was adding up to something that was NOT ME. I was constantly trying to meet other people's expectations rather than to just BE MYSELF. I had to trust some key professional advice, yes. But I also had to trust what I felt inside—my INSTINCTS, my INNER SELF.

So, what I wish for you to develop, early, is what I didn't have: the quiet confidence to TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS, to be able to say: "This is what I think. This is what I'm going to do. This is what works for me."

When that moment of self-discovery happens, it is a powerful thing, and it will always serve you well.

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I'd like to share with you my experiences of the last 3 years about my final piece of advice and that is: Keeping your Perspective.

Just before I was hired by CBS to anchor The Early Show on CBS, with Bryant Gumbel, I was at home in my little studio apartment in LA making lists of everything I needed to do, when the telephone rang.

My jaw fell to the floor as the voice on the other end of the line explained: "This is Elder Neal Maxwell's office in Salt Lake City. Elder Maxwell would like to speak with you. Do you have a moment that I may put him on the line?" Suddenly, there was nothing on my to-do list but to speak with an apostle of the Lord.

Elder Maxwell was gracious and kind. He briefly explained that in his capacity overseeing Church Public Affairs, he had heard about my new opportunity in New York. He told me he felt prompted to offer me a blessing as I began this new chapter in my life. If I was interested, he said, and if it wasn't too "inconvenient," perhaps I could pass through Salt Lake City on my way to New York.

I hung up the phone and immediately changed my flight plans. Within a few days, my parents and I flew to Salt Lake and drove to Elder Maxwell's home. He and Sister Maxwell welcomed us so warmly—as if we had known them for years.

As he pronounced the blessing, I was struck by his extraordinary eloquence. The Spirit was so powerful. Elder Maxwell said many things, but there was one directive that penetrated my mind most deeply:

"You must allow the Lord to use you. . . . Sometimes you will not understand what he is doing . . . or why he is doing it. But do not question. You must allow him to guide you and direct you."

Sister Maxwell served us delicious soda cracker peach pie and, less than an hour after we had arrived, we were back at the airport boarding our connecting flight to New York.

Within a few days, I found myself at the center of a conference call. And I began to understand, just a little bit, some of what was ahead. It was actually a press conference, via telephone. I was being "introduced" as the new co-anchor of The Early Show. Twenty to thirty print reporters from around the country had gathered from their respective cities.

They were journalists and critics from newspapers and magazines such as the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, USA Today and TV Guide. It was a tough crowd.

I remember a conversation with the president of CBS News just before the call. We were reviewing “talking points” for this important meeting, and I told him I had a feeling that my religion might come up in the course of the conference call.

In a somewhat disbelieving tone he said, “Oh, Jane, we’re beyond that.”

Well, sure enough, not more than three minutes into the conference call, came one of the first questions. It wasn’t about my reporting experience. It wasn’t about any stories I’d covered. It had to do with my choice of beverage in the morning. They could not believe that I didn’t drink coffee!

One reporter nearly shouted out, in a deep, gruff voice: “You’re a Mormon?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Do you drink coffee?”

“No, no I don’t drink coffee.” Slight pause . . .

“How can anyone possibly wake up at 3:45 in the morning, do a two-hour television broadcast, and not drink coffee?”

I began laughing, but soon realized that she wasn’t kidding.

The next morning, her newspaper column read something like this:

‘Jane Clayson . . . a Mormon who doesn’t drink coffee . . .’ and on with the rest of the story.

Anchoring The Early Show was one of the most invigorating experiences of my life. It was also one of the most difficult periods of my life because of the physically and emotionally grueling routine it required. I had absolutely no idea what I was getting myself into.

Mornings began with that 3:45 A.M. alarm clock. I’d arrive at the 5th Avenue studio and, depending on how big the bags were under my eyes, spend thirty to forty minutes in hair and makeup. Stop off in wardrobe. Skim four newspapers. Revise and prepare news segments for that day. Be briefed by producers about overnight interview changes. Be on the air at 6:30 A.M. to promote the broadcast to five or six East Coast affiliate, local-station anchor teams. Cameras were then live from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. Then there was more promotion with West Coast anchors until 10:00 A.M.

And that was the fun part of the day.

Following the broadcast, meetings lasted until noon. Luncheons or speaking engagements at mid-day. There was almost always a photo shoot or a taped interview to be done in the afternoon. I'd get home by 5:30 P.M. for a quick dinner. And then packets would arrive between 6:30 and 7:00 P.M. Packets meant homework. Lots of homework. Preparation for the next day's show included reading, outlining, and preparing questions from five 15- to 20-page information packets. I used to say it was like preparing for five college-level term papers every night.

Bedtime was 9:00 or maybe 9:30. And then it was time to get up and do it all over again.

The routine was relentless. But every morning brought an opportunity to interview the biggest newsmakers of the day, from Washington to Hollywood and all around the world.

It was the Secretary of State one minute, Tom Hanks the next.

And more often than I ever imagined, some issue related to my religion would come up. Not only did I not take a morning coffee, but I also had to explain to producers that I needed sparkling cider on the set in lieu of the wine or champagne everybody else was drinking during cooking segments (yes, it was 8:30 in the morning!).

I soon realized that who I was and what I believed was a source of fascination for some people. So, what I said and how I reacted was always very much in the forefront of my mind.

I met many people and interacted with many colleagues who, surprisingly, would say to me, "I've never met a Mormon before." In the world of network news I was an anomaly. I sometimes felt like a display in a department store window and heard more than once, "Oh, you're the Mormon!"

There were many wonderful opportunities to move beyond the inevitable questions about polygamy and the Word of Wisdom and help people understand Latter-day Saints as people of faith and service who live good lives and try to do what's right. In a very profound way, I felt a special responsibility as a member of the Lord's Church. And as time went on I could feel myself being used by the Lord to write a chapter in my life that I never could have imagined.

Still, there were plenty of powerful and persuasive voices trying to nudge me into doing things that would have made up a very different kind of story.

(Glamour Magazine Shoot)

I remember, in particular, a lunch meeting with a CBS executive who handed me a "personal PR plan" in conjunction with the broadcast. As part of that plan she suggested

that it would be very nice if I DATED someone “famous, maybe an actor or an athlete,” she said. “That’s always a sure way to generate good press.”

Sure, good press for the show, but what would it do to my story, the one I had been slowly turning over to the Lord?

I had extraordinary experiences in network news.

Then, a poignant moment initiated a series of events that changed the course of my life.

I was at Ground Zero in New York City on the one-year anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on our country, anchoring with Dan Rather CBS’s coverage of that terrible day. I had returned from Washington, D.C., two days earlier, where I had interviewed First Lady Laura Bush in the Blue Room of the White House. In many ways, professionally, I was on top of the world.

The emotions of the day hit me quite forcefully. I looked into the faces of those who had lost someone the year before—a husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, best friend—and thought, over and over, Life is so fragile. The most important things we have are our relationships with our families and those we love.

I could not put those feelings aside. As I allowed my mind to wander and reflect, I stumbled upon two quotes that have since become favorites:

First, from the actress and comedienne Lily Tomlin: “You can win the rat race, but you’re still a rat.”

And this, from the Pulitzer Prize winning writer Anna Quindlen: “If your success is not on your own terms, if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your soul, it is not success at all”

It hit me that there will always be another project. There will always be another interview. There will always be another high-profile assignment. Make no mistake, I was grateful for the many tremendous experiences I was having. I was passionate about my work. I even felt that I was fulfilling a particular mission I had been called to serve. But, I also felt that one of my deepest longings had not been met. And that was to be a wife and a mother.

Shortly after this experience, I met my husband, Mark. And, not long after, on the grounds of the Salt Lake Temple, he asked me to marry him. Seven weeks later we returned to the Salt Lake Temple, where we were married.

What happened over the course of the next few months is not something I could have choreographed on my own, or even dreamed up for that matter. In fact, I am convinced



that the timing of some of the events that followed were more than interesting coincidences, which I talk about in detail in my book.

It has been three years now since I left my television career in New York City to get married and to have a family. Many of my colleagues told me I was crazy, that I was out of my mind. I had turned down a lucrative, four-year network contract, working on exciting, high-profile, prime-time projects.

When I explained to one rather influential colleague that I would not be taking that contract offer, he told me I was making a terrible decision that I would regret for years to come. "What will you be without your job?" he asked. "If you leave television now, you're done." He quoted an old CBS newsmen as saying, "Without work, there is no meaning to life." And finally, knowing of my faith, he asked, "What are you going to do—move up there and teach Sunday school?" Well, as it turned out, the first Sunday in my new ward, I was called to teach the Gospel Doctrine class.

Another network executive asked me what I was going to do once I got to Boston. I told her I was going to have a family, I was going to be a mother. "No, I understand that," she said, puzzled, "but what are you going to do?"

This experience has taught me one of the most important lessons of my life, which I feel impressed to share, often, especially with young women—the beautiful young women here today: There are seasons in life. Don't ever let anyone deny you the blessings and joy of one season because they believe you should be in—or stay in—another season.

And never be afraid to aspire to be a mother.

Along your path, there will always be people with their own agendas, who will always be there to tell you: What you Should Think. How you Should Feel. What you Ought to do. Don't listen. Trust your instincts. Keep Perspective.

And set your moral compass... NOW.

In the world of Network Television News, I witnessed some rather remarkable things. And I worked along side people who would literally DO ANYTHING—morally and otherwise—to get ahead.

Let me tell you today: NO JOB, NO CAREER, NO SUCCESS IS EVER WORTH THAT.

And may I add this: There will always be another project. There will always be another exclusive interview, another high profile assignment. I didn't ever want to look back on my life and point to a bookshelf of videotapes and say, "That's been my life." Or a wall full of pictures with famous people and say, "That's been my life."

My dear friends, it is so much easier to write a resume than it is to craft a spirit.

Let me tell you, now that I have two children under 2½, and 3 stepchildren getting ready to become teenagers, I often say, as hard as I worked in TV, I work harder at home!

And some days I think it would be easier—if not preferable—to be a foreign correspondent than it would be to be a mother. There are definitely moments when I am down on my hands and knees mopping up yet another mess, when I look up at the TV to see one of my old friends interviewing someone interesting or globetrotting on a big story, and I think, “What have I done?”

But as I look into the little faces of my sweet children—I WOULD NOT DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

I WOULDN'T.

Because I trusted in the Lord, and I will continue to trust in the Lord as I make decisions about the direction of my life.

I know what I gave up for this season of my life. And I know what I gave it up for.

I traded in fancy lunches in fancy restaurants for delicious, bunny-shaped macaroni and cheese. There's no one to do my hair and make-up anymore (quite obviously!). Some mornings I'm lucky to squeak in a shower. When I get up at 4:00 A.M. these days, it's not to be chauffeured off to a studio. Now, in the wee hours of the morning, you'll often find me in tucked in the corner of the nursery, lulling a little baby (or two!) back to sleep. No more pats on the backs for booking exclusive interviews. They don't give awards for best diaper change of the day. And I don't get a paycheck you can cash at any bank. Now my rewards come in packages money can't buy.

There will be times when YOU have to make decisions about the direction of your life, and only YOU can know what's right for you at each stage of your life.

My path is not your path, and your path is unique to you.

And I hope you'll always look for the "NOW WHAT" moments in your life – and PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER THE LORD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE.

Those moments are turning points. Yes, they can be scary. But they are the doorways to the next opportunity, the next adventure, to the next season of life.

I didn't bury my career—I still do projects for the Discovery Network and National Public Radio. But my life IS very different than it was before.

And I wouldn't have it any other way.

May I tell you a story that illustrates that point?

Not long ago, Mark and I were in Florida visiting Mark's mom, with newborn Ella and my 3 step-kids. One morning after breakfast we were all walking through the lobby of the hotel.

I had our children in tow and probably looked a little frazzled, dressed in my "mommy clothes" – hair pulled back, no make-up on.

Suddenly from across the room I hear someone say, "Jane, Jane – is that you?"

I turned around to see a rather well-known old friend, someone I had interviewed years before on The Early Show. He looked just the same—He was dressed and pressed perfectly.

\*I\* looked quite different—with a baby in arms, diaper bag over my shoulder and clad in my fabulous "new-mom" wardrobe.

After a round of introductions, this fellow looked at me, and for as long as I live I'll never forget what he said:

"So... what are you up to these days?" Then he paused, looked down at my kids, and said, "—just a mom?"

In a split second I had to decide.... What was I going to say?

What came out of my mouth surprised me at first, but also made me very happy.

"Just a mom?" I thought.

"No!" I proclaimed with a smile. "No. I am a mother!"

He got the message.

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My brothers and sisters, this is the greatest university in the world.

There is no place that will prepare you from the INSIDE OUT for the many challenges and choices that are ahead of you. And there is no question—our Heavenly Father has wonderful things in store for you.

Will you please remember to TRUST IN HIM.

Have FAITH that HE KNOWS you.

HE LOVES you.

And He will BLESS.

I KNOW HE WILL.

That is my prayer and my testimony, in the sacred name of our Savior, Jesus Christ,  
Amen.